

The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth

"To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word"—Isa. 66:2

LET these words, brethren and sisters, penetrate, and sink down deep into our hearts, and enter into our minds and our thoughts. Consider them very seriously, ponder over them, dwell upon them, meditate upon them, "give ourselves wholly unto these things," as they are indeed words of good sound advice.

If we endeavour to follow this pattern, to live our lives accordingly, that is, in meekness, humbleness and of a contrite spirit, we shall enjoy great comfort and satisfaction, and the greatest blessing of all—reap the reward that is set before us, even life-eternal.

Jesus, that beloved Shepherd of the sheep, tells us (Matt. 5:3):

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

How beautiful are the words of our Lord and Saviour! "The poor in spirit" blend in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "To him that is of a poor and contrite spirit."

And further in v. 4—

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

Thus we see the Master in quoting these words, "they that mourn" conveying and expressing unto us the meaning of the words of the prophet Isaiah again in "of a contrite spirit."

The definition of this word "contrite" is: "broken-hearted for sin; deeply affected with grief and sorrow for sin; humble or penitent."

This immediately brings to our mind such faithful servants of God as the prophets, who were all "of a contrite spirit." We might mention, Moses, David, Job, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and above all our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who was a man of sorrows, (contrite), acquainted with grief—not for his own sins, for he was personally sinless, but in union and fellow-feeling with all his erring and repentant brethren.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4).

In Mark 6:6 we read—

"And he, (that is, Jesus) marvelled"—or was astonished and very sorrowful—"because of their unbelief."

Particular mention could be made at this time of the prophet Jeremiah, who was very much of a "contrite spirit," notably as a lamenting, sorrowful, weeping prophet—sorrowful and weeping due to the great waywardness and sin of the children of Israel, in turning from their God, the only true God, unto wickedness and idol worship.

He continually pleaded with them to repent and turn from their evil ways, and predicted that God would bring about the downfall of Jerusalem, but his words only fell upon deaf ears.

* * *

RETURNING to Matt. 5, we find Jesus declares (v. 5)—

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

How many meek persons can we find in this large universe today? How many even consider meekness a virtue worth striving after? The world glories in the very opposite characteristics.

But the question arises, brethren and sisters, what of conditions in the Household of Faith? How do we stand in relation to these things? Are we meek, humble, mourning, poor, and of a contrite spirit?

Only those who are found thus, who are without spot or blemish, shall inherit the earth or be granted a position in his glorious Kingdom, when our Great Redeemer shall appear to judge each one according as his work shall be.

The Psalmist speaks similar words in Psalm 37:11—

"But the meek shall inherit the earth: and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Could it in any sense be said there is "abundance of peace" in this untoward generation in which we dwell? The Scriptures reveal, and we see all around us, that, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." Corruption, ungodliness and evil surround us on every side, and there is no peace for him that cometh in or goeth out.

The apostle Paul outlines our position quite clearly in Gal. 5:22-24—

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified"—put away or destroyed — "the flesh with the affections and lusts."

These three words "meek," "humble" and "contrite" go very much hand in hand together. That is to say, they all contain or convey a similar meaning. "A meek man" is one of a mild temper, gentle, humble, submissive, not easily provoked or irritated.

And if we look upon a "humble man," he would have many of the same characteristics, and he would also be lowly, not proud, arrogant, nor seeking a high and lofty position and great honor and glory. James declares (4:6)—

"God resisteth the proud but giveth grace (or favor) unto the humble."

And in v. 10 he exhorts—

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up."

And the Spirit's counsel through Peter is the same—

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

The word "contrite," too, blends in and harmonizes with the word "humble," as in Isa. 57:15—

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy:

"I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

This is a vital divine principle, worthy of very serious thought and self-examination. Natural man does not possess these characteristics. Yet those who are to be accepted by God must overcome the flesh and develop these spiritual attributes. This is infinitely more important, and worthy of infinitely more study and effort and practice, than acquiring any of the world's science, learning or skills. **Those** are only for a few short years. **This** is a matter that will determine our eternal destiny.

God's children are those of a broken heart and do mourn at the present time, but such will not always be the case, as the Great Deity will "revive the heart of the contrite ones" through His Beloved Son. Psalm 30:5 promises—

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

There is much weeping and lamentation during this long night of sorrow, through which we are passing—great distress, great mourning. But we look toward Zion's glad morning, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, with healing in his beams to comfort the broken-hearted and those that mourn, to those who look for him and love and rejoice in his appearing.

Brethren and sisters, are we truly among those contrite ones of this frame of mind? Are we prepared? That is the vital and all important question.

The world does not live in godly sorrow, neither do they mourn, but very much to the contrary. Though the world is full of misery and fear, men are running to and fro, lovers of pleasure, not lovers of God, eating, drinking, and making merry. But it is only for a little season, and they pass away. The memory of them is forgotten. They are as the beasts that perish.

No doubt they think it strange that we take no part in their activities, and therefore turn upon us, speaking evil of us. Nevertheless our instructions are quite clear. As true brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, we must, by all means—

"Come out from among them and be ye SEPARATE and TOUCH NOT the unclean thing"
(2 Cor. 6:17).

And all that is of the world, not just part of it, but ALL, is the unclean thing. Let us read what the apostle Peter has to say in this regard (1 Pet. 4:4)—

"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

But we take great comfort in Jesus' words (John 15:18)—

"If the world hate you, you know it hated me also."

So it is we see, that only the meek and humble shall inherit the earth and as a result these shall consist of only a very small few (Luke 12:32)—

"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Man to-day seeks all the honor, glory and pride, that he can possibly attain unto, with the highest position and all the money and wealth that go with it. Such is not a meek man, neither is he humble. Only that man who is of a poor and contrite spirit will God accept—

"To this man I will look ..."
—or extend favor to, or grant the reward of immortality, of life that knows no ending—

". . . he that trembleth at My Word."

The meaning conveyed here is to pay strict attention, to fear with all diligence and desire—a great zeal—an unfading and undying love for His Word. And here it is we see, just as the Scripture hath revealed —

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).

"Wise men after the flesh"—those who attain unto a great knowledge, wisdom and education in worldly affairs, scientists, professors, the mighty and noble—are not the type God can use. There is too much pride, self-satisfaction, glorying in worldly accomplishments and **subservience to worldly judgment and opinion and esteem.**

So the lesson contained herein for us is just this: Ye see your calling brethren, abstain from, forsake these things, seek not worldly honor, glory, pride, pleasure, wealth and position, but rather govern ourselves according to v. 31 of this same chapter—

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Seek first that wisdom which is from above, for all else is but vanity and pride and vexation of spirit. The Psalmist says (Psa. 147:6)—

"The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground."

When we speak of a meek, humble man, our minds at once turn to our beloved Saviour, Jesus Christ, the meekest man that ever trod this earth. There was no guile found in his mouth, neither was there any fault found in him. He calls to us (Matt. 11:28-29)—

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart"—(of a sad and poor and contrite spirit)—"and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Place much confidence, take great comfort, in these words, brethren and sisters, for **it is the meek that shall inherit the earth**, and receive the crown of life that fadeth not away, the "coronal wreath" of victory.

* * *

WHILE considering this word "meek" we must return for a few moments to the man Moses. According to the infallible Word of the Deity—and His Word is very much infallible, by which is meant to be not capable of error, perfect, reliable and certain, that which is sound, solid and secure, a solid anchor; furthermore, His Word is all-powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword.

According, then, to this most precious Word—

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

There must have been a good reason for Yahweh making such a statement as this, and if we peruse the life of Moses, we find there was truly a very good reason. It is recorded—

"And the woman conceived, and bore a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months" (Exo. 2:2).

And a little later (v. 10)—

"And she (Pharaoh's daughter) called his name Moses, because 'I drew him out of the water'."

Truly a type of the greater than Moses, the Son of God, in that he was drawn out, delivered out of the deep. Consigned to death by the Gentiles as a man-child of Israel, he was preserved and came forth to newness of life.

It was not the will of the Father, that either he, that is Moses, or Christ, should perish or see corruption. Moses, drawn out, separated, appointed of God, to be a deliverer of His people Israel from Egyptian darkness and bondage.

Again we see the great type in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in Exo. 3:1. Moses is a keeper of the flock, Christ is also that "Great Shepherd of the sheep."

We have said that Moses was a meek, humble man, having no desire for honor, glory, pride and great position, all of which he could have had under Pharaoh king of Egypt. The apostle Paul says of him in this connection (Heb. 11:24-27)—

"By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible."

Surely this is none but the attitude of a lowly, humble, meek man. Moses looked for a much greater reward than mighty Egypt's riches and honor. Do we look in the same manner?

Also when God appeared unto Moses in the bush, to appoint him to deliver His people "Israel" from the land of Egypt, Moses replies in Exo. 4:10—

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou has spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

Whether, he had an impediment in his speech or was now of a shy, retiring nature we do not know. It would seem rather to be more likely the latter. Of his younger days in Egypt it is recorded that he was "mighty in word and deed." Forty years in the wilderness had humbled him. Yet far mightier words and deeds lay before him, though he knew it not.

But in any event, whatever his handicap, we know that with God all things are possible and nothing is impossible, so He said unto Moses—

"I will put the words in thy mouth."

And He appointed Aaron as his mouthpiece. Not all brethren in Christ Jesus are fitted for exhortation, for lecturing, but everyone has his own duties to perform in the work of the Lord. It was the one-talent servant who hid away what his lord had entrusted to him to put to use, and who was so severely punished and rejected.

It is the will of God, that we work together in all things, in the bonds of love and peace, each esteeming his brother better than himself to be, but each laboring to do his best.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9:10).

This is the great lesson contained herein for us, brethren and sisters, let us strive to abide by it. For as it is so beautifully expressed by Paul—

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12:18).

This applies to both the natural body and the spiritual body, for we are all members of that "One Body in Christ Jesus." Therefore all should be shown the same kindness, the same love and consideration—

"That there should be no schism"—division, upheaval, strife, contention, quarrelling—"in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

And here is the point that should be stressed and imprinted deeply upon our minds:

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (v. 26).

If one member of the body, a hand or foot, suffer a cut, bruise, fracture or break, the whole body suffers, it is felt with pain throughout the whole body. So, likewise in the One Body in Christ Jesus for (v. 27):

"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

WE return in our thoughts to Moses. Although we are well aware of the fact that God was directing the steps of Moses, who other than a meek, quiet, humble man could contend with and withstand and endure the stubbornness and rebelliousness of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in refusing to allow the children of Israel to leave the land?

Moses had all the characteristics previously mentioned, slow to be irritated, not easily provoked or given to anger; that is the reason Deity chose him to play the part—again a type of the Greater than Moses.

Of course we do also recognize that Yahweh was behind the hand of Pharaoh. He said:

"I will harden the heart of Pharaoh, that he will not let My people go."

Some question the justice of God in this. They are on dangerous ground. In the first place, God did not **change** Pharaoh; He **hardened** him in the path Pharaoh himself chose.

And in the second place, this hardening was a perfectly righteous and judicial punishment for Pharaoh's previous wickedness in his past treatment of Israel.

If we choose a course of evil, God may harden us in it as our fitting punishment, so that we cannot leave it. Remember Esau. God is not mocked. He does not wait with patience upon man's foolishness for ever, though He is of infinite mercy to them who truly seek with all their hearts to please Him.

* * *

THERE is one more point we should like to bring out in regard to the meekness of Moses. This concerns his leading the Israelites forty years through the wilderness.

How often we have read of their continual murmuring and complaining against Moses, and not only Moses, but against the only true God, and turning their backs against Him! Moses said unto them—

"Ye murmur, and complain, not against me, but against God."

Again we say, it would require a man of Moses' stamp to put up with such a stiff-necked and rebellious people. In this it is evident why Yahweh declares Moses to be a very meek, humble, quiet and peace-loving man, and servant of the Most High.

It is only those of us who are this sort that shall enter into "that rest" when our Great Redeemer shall appear.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psa. 24:3-4).

It is also only through and by this means—or great meekness, humbleness, lowliness, and of a poor and contrite spirit—that we shall have clean hands and a pure heart.

God will accept only those who are poor in relation to this world's goods, but rich in faith. This is the complete answer; there is no other way, for "This is the way, walk ye in it."

What a beautiful and wondrous story to read the life history of those faithful patriarchs of old. There is no man-made history book, be it ancient or modern, that can come in any way near, or compare, unto God's most holy written Word.

Will it not be a great joy, a joy that words cannot express, to meet these "true and faithful worthies," beloved servants of "Almighty Deity," face to face: and a much greater joy, to be blessed with that gift that they shall receive, even Life Eternal.

Thanks be unto our Heavenly Father, through His beloved Son, that we are called out, separated, from this darkness which covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, unto His most glorious Light!

So let it be, when we put our hand to the Gospel plow, to not turn back.

The course we pursue is not an easy one, the field or ground, (the world) in which we plow, labor and work, is not smooth and level, but is very rough and rugged. But when we stop and consider, was it not so with the prophets, the apostles, and even much more so with our Beloved Saviour?

Our burdens may be heavy, our load not light, but theirs was greater by far, and what is more, their living conditions were much harder than anything we have to endure. Brethren and sisters, let us consider and meditate prayerfully upon these things.

Let us turn our attention for a moment to the words that Jesus spoke unto his disciples:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.

"And ye shall be sorrowful . . .

We note well these next words:

". . . but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20).

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"—what great joy, what great rejoicing, what great consolation!

—F.P. March 1964 Berean